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SITUATION REPORTS

POLAND

Solidarity yesterday set the stage for a confrontation with the regime over shorter work hours by tentatively deciding to support immediate implementation of a 40-hour workweek. According to Western press reports, a formal resolution is slated to be adopted today.

Solidarity indicated a willingness to discuss the issue but apparently intends to instruct its membership to work the shorter week until negotiations with the government have resolved the controversy. If Solidarity reaffirms this position today, much of the Polish work force probably will stay away from the job this Saturday.

Deputy Prime Minister Jagielski yesterday took the government's position to the populace. He said that the government is prepared to accept one of two alternatives, thereby suggesting a willingness to negotiate, but restated its argument that a shorter workweek should be introduced gradually. The regime may hope that one of the alternatives--a five-day, 42.5-hour workweek--is attractive enough to draw Solidarity into negotiations.

Despite government-union differences on this issue, yesterday's session of Solidarity's national leadership included an unusual show of cooperation between the two sides. For the first time, a regime spokesman attended a meeting of Solidarity's National Coordinating Commission.

The presence of the Deputy Prime Minister responsible for union affairs is evidence of the government's willingness to consult Solidarity on important and sensitive issues. In the past, the regime would simply have announced its plans without consulting those most affected.

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The session, which continues today, took the first step toward establishing Solidarity's newspaper by appointing an adviser to Solidarity leader Walesa as editor in chief. The adviser is a moderate lay Catholic with good contacts in the Church Episcopate.

The dispute between farmers and the regime in south-east Poland continued yesterday. The farmers broke off talks with a government delegation that they felt had no mandate to negotiate a settlement.

The party Politburo has tried to appear forthcoming toward farmers' demands by announcing new concessions, including the elimination of a land tax on farms in mountainous areas and a freeze on the prices of certain state agricultural services.

The regime is trying to counter demands for independent rural unions by holding out the prospect of increased self-management in the countryside. Such gestures probably will have little immediate impact on farmers, whose hostility has been nurtured by decades of broken promises and neglect.

Moscow on Trade Unions

Soviet radiobroadcasts to Poland are presenting a restrictive interpretation of the role of trade unions in a socialist society.

A broadcast Tuesday stressed that the main tasks of trade unions are to increase productivity and strengthen labor discipline. The broadcast also quoted Lenin on the "need" for the Communist Party to direct the activity of trade unions.

A *Pravda* article in December conceded that day-to-day trade union activities are determined by the prevailing local conditions in each country. When Moscow Radio broadcast this article to Poland, it omitted the more flexible passages.

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The *Pravda* article seemed to be an ideological justification to a Soviet audience for the Kremlin's tolerance thus far of changes in Poland's trade union structure that would be unacceptable in the USSR. The Soviets, however, evidently believe that projecting too flexible a stance to a Polish audience would risk encouraging the activity of the new, independent unions.

Polish Economic Reforms

The minor economic reforms that the regime put into effect last week are not likely to have much impact on raising productivity or output--the greatest needs of the economy. The reforms include provisions for limited decentralization of industrial enterprises and expansion of the worker's role in the enterprises.

The new measures are watered down by the exclusion of a large number of enterprises from the reforms, by central control over investment, and by continued reliance on the measurement of plan fulfillment in physical terms rather than in monetary terms. The regime has said that a draft proposal for more substantial reforms will be made public later this month.